

41. The Local Races of Burchell's Zebra. By Major J. STEVENSON-HAMILTON, C.M.Z.S., Game Warden of the Transvaal.

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(Text-figures 102-106.)

INDEX.

	Page
Variation	757

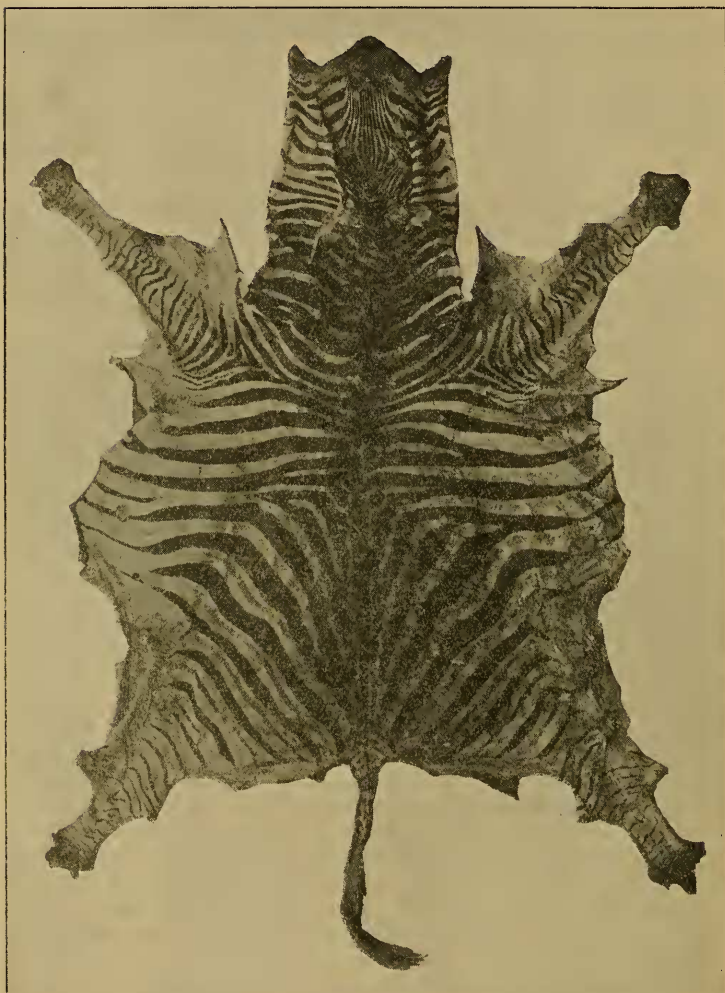
Burchell's Zebra (*Equus burchelli*) south of the Zambesi is usually divided by naturalists into several local races—*wahlbergi*, *transvaalensis*, *chapmanni*, *selousi*. These derive their subspecific distinctions from certain assumed differences in their leg and body striping as observed in museum specimens. Thus:—

"In *wahlbergi* the body stripes meet the ventral stripe inferiorly, while the legs are more or less fully striped; the shadow stripes on the hind quarters are strongly developed and not much narrower than the main stripes, which are narrower than the intervening spaces, while the fetlocks and pasterns are devoid of stripes and spots. A female zebra from the Transvaal differing from the typical *wahlbergi* by the extension of the shadow stripes to the neck, has been named *E. b. transvaalensis*. In *E. b. chapmanni* the shadow stripes have become faint and narrow, the legs are marked to the hoofs, but the stripes on the lower portions tend to break up into spots, and the inferior part of the pasterns is not wholly black. This race inhabits the country between Damaraland and Matabeleland. The last representative of the species with distinct shadow stripes is the Mashonaland bonte quagga (*E. b. selousi*), which differs from the last in that the striping of the legs is complete right down to the hoofs, the pasterns being striped on both sides, and their lower portion, owing to the fusion of several stripes, wholly black. The sides of the tail are also striped." (Lydekker.)

Long observation of the herds of Burchell's Zebra, running in the Transvaal Game Reserves, has convinced me that all or nearly all the above distinctions are found among them, frequently in the same herd. I have often discussed the matter with Dr. Gunning, of the Transvaal Museum, and have with him examined skins and live specimens obtained from the Western and Northern Transvaal. There is no doubt that any of these might, from their markings, have come from the Eastern part of the Province. Among the herds found in the latter occurs a very great variety of striping. Some animals show heavy, wide, and deeply tinted shadow stripes, while others display only the slightest indications of them. Some are strongly ringed down to the fetlocks, while others have no signs at all of any markings

below the knees and hocks. In some cases the body stripes are continued right round the barrel to the ventral stripe, in others

Text-fig. 102.

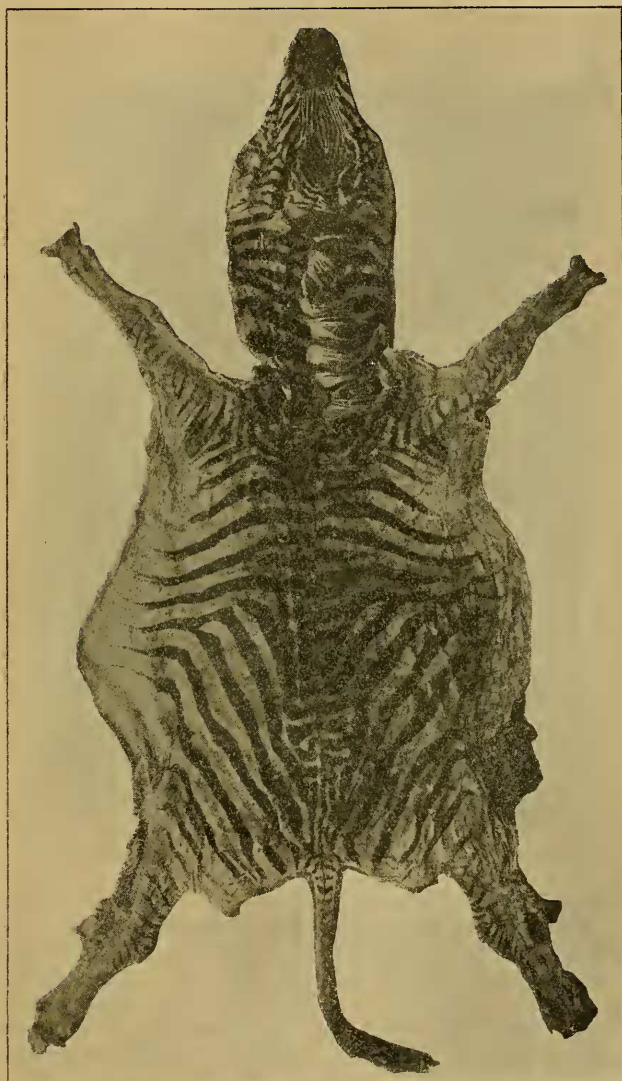


Burchell's Zebra, ♂, six years old, from south of the Sabi River,
Eastern Transvaal.

they stop far short of it. The striping is usually carried right round the buttocks, but in I should say 20 per cent. at least of the

animals in each herd this is not the case. In fact there appears to be no special distinctive marking common to any locality or

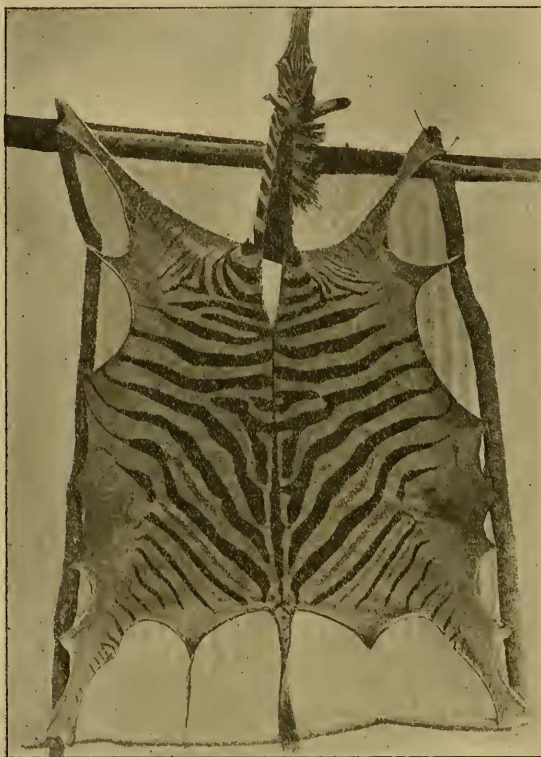
Text-fig. 103.



Burchell's Zebra, ♂, ten years old, from south of the Sabi River,
Eastern Transvaal.

even herd. The shadow stripes on the neck, said to be distinctive of *E. b. transvaalensis*, have been occasionally, but very rarely, noticed in individuals, and I cannot conceive their presence to be more than an individual eccentricity, occasionally perhaps transmitted to offspring, but by no means constant.

Text-fig. 104.



Burchell's Zebra, ♀, eight years old, from south of the Sabi River,
Eastern Transvaal.

During the year 1911 I was asked to obtain a couple of skins for the Transvaal Museum, and selected two stallions from the same herd at a point a few miles south of the Sabi River (roughly 25 degrees S. lat. by 31 E. long.). I chose them merely as being typical of the darker and lighter forms of striping respectively, neither of them being in any way exceptional. Some animals present displayed deeper striping than the specimen shown in text-fig. 102, while others showed more white than that in text-fig. 103. These figures are from photographs of the skins. Text-

fig. 102 is that of a stallion six years old, and text-fig. 103 is of one about ten years of age. A little later I obtained the skins of a mare and her foal killed at a spot less than ten miles from where I had shot the two stallions. The photographs of these are reproduced as text-figs. 104 and 105.

Text-fig. 105.



Burchell's Zebra, ♂, foal, from south of the Sabi River, Eastern Transvaal.

In the first stallion (text-fig. 102) both the ordinary and the shadow stripings are exceptionally strong, and the former is continued down and nearly all round the legs to the pasterns, which are quite black. The body stripes meet the ventral line throughout. The dorsal stripe is wide and very strongly marked. The neck stripes are exceptionally deep, and set very close together.

In the second stallion (text-fig. 103) the shadow striping is not nearly so well defined and the black stripes also are narrower. The body stripes do not extend all round the barrel, and there is practically no connection between them and the not very distinct

ventral stripe. The dorsal stripe is a very narrow black line, and there is a distinct gridiron pattern on the back. The legs are very slightly striped below the knees and hocks, and there are only a few black hairs on the pasterns.

In the case of the mare (text-fig. 104), while there is a well-marked ventral and a wide dorsal stripe, and complete union between the former and the barrel stripes, there is an entire absence of any black markings from all the pasterns, and from the fore legs below the knees.

Text-fig. 106.



Burchell's Zebra, ♂; the same animal as that shown in text-fig. 103, photographed just after death.

In the foal again (text-fig. 105), while the legs all bear faint indications only of stripes, the pasterns are all quite black, and there is some indication of a gridiron pattern on the back.

In none of the specimens is there the smallest indication of any shadow striping on the neck. It will be noticed also that in the younger stallion and the mare (text-figs. 102 & 104) the frontal stripes on the face run straight from forehead to nose, while in the older stallion (text-fig. 103) (and to some extent in the foal (text-fig. 105), though it does not show up well in the figure) the frontal stripes tend to form concentric rings.

